

If you think you have been discriminated against, know your Rights

Through the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 ("ICRA"), Congress statutorily imposed on tribal governments provisions similar to those found in the Bill of Rights. Commonly known as the Indian Bill of Rights, the ICRA provides protections similar, but not identical, to those provided by the United States Constitution. Tribal forums are available to enforce rights created by the ICRA. Federal courts do not oversee tribal compliance with the ICRA, except in cases of habeas corpus (The United States Commission on Civil Rights, December 2007).

The American Indian Religious Freedom Act declares that a lack of clear and adequate legal protection for the religious use of peyote by Indians might serve to stigmatize Indian tribes and cultures and increase the risk that they would be exposed to discriminatory treatment. On that basis, the act preserves Indians' rights to the sacramental use of peyote. Likewise, a 1994 presidential memorandum recognizes the sacred place of eagle feathers in Native American culture and religious practices and provides easier access to scarce eagle carcasses and parts (The United States Commission on Civil Rights, December 2007).

Civil rights laws passed by Congress protect all citizens, including Native Americans and non-Native Americans. Therefore, any Native American can bring a discrimination complaint if he or she suffers discrimination by the federal, state, or local governments, or individuals on account of race, color, creed, religion, sex, or national origin with respect to housing, employment, commercial transactions, or access to public accommodations (The United States Commission on Civil Rights, December 2007).

If you think you have been discriminated against because you are a Native American, you should file a complaint with the appropriate agency listed below.

The U.S. Department of Justice
Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530
(202) 514-2151
Fax: (202) 514-0293
www.usdoj.gov/crt

The U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Tribal Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 5634
Washington, D.C. 20530
(202) 514-8812
Fax: (202) 514-9078
www.usdoj.gov/otj

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Regional Offices
Address complaints to the: Regional Director.

Rocky Mountain Regional Office
1961 Stout Street, Suite 240
Denver, Colorado 80294
Telephone: (303) 866-1040
TTY: (303) 866-1049
Fax: (303) 866-1050

Western Regional Office
300 North Los Angeles Street, Suite 2010
Los Angeles, California 90012
Telephone: (213) 894-3437
TTY: (213) 894-3435
Fax: (303) 894-0508

Rocky Mountain Regional Office covers the States of **Colorado**, Montana, **New Mexico**, North Dakota, South Dakota, **Utah**, and Wyoming.

Western Regional Office covers the States of Alaska, **Arizona**, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, and Washington.

The United States Attorneys' Offices

Address complaints to the: United States Attorney

Arizona

Two Renaissance Square
40 North Central Avenue, Suite 1200
Phoenix, Arizona 85004-4408
Telephone: (602) 514-7500
Fax: (602) 514-7693

Colorado

Seventeenth Street Plaza
1225 17th Street, Suite 700
Denver, Colorado 80202
Telephone: (303) 454-0100
Fax: (303) 454-0409

New Mexico

P.O. Box 607
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103
Telephone: (505) 346-7274
Fax: (505) 346-7296

Utah

185 South State Street, Suite 300
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
Telephone: (801) 524-5682
Fax: (801) 524-6924

Local Human Rights Offices

Address complaints to the: Executive Director

Arizona

Civil Rights Division of the Arizona Attorney
General (Phoenix Office)
1275 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
Phone: (602) 542-5263

Colorado

Citizens Commission on Human Rights
PMB #516
303 South Broadway, Suite 200
Denver, Colorado 80209
Phone: (303) 789-5225

The Navajo Nation

P.O. Box 3390
Window Rock, Arizona 86511
Phone: (928) 871-7436
Fax: (928) 871-7437

New Mexico

Albuquerque Human Rights Office
P.O. Box 1293
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103
Phone: (505) 924-3380

Utah

Citizens Commission on Human Rights
P.O. Box 521384
Salt Lake City, Utah 84154
Phone: (801) 329-2869

How to File a Complaint (outside the Navajo Nation)

Your complaint should be in writing, preferably typed or printed neatly, dated, signed, and should include the following information:

- Your name;
- Your address;
- Your home and work telephone numbers;

- The name(s) and address(es) of the person(s) and/or establishment you believe to have discriminated against you;
- A description of the act(s). This should include the date and place of the action(s), and what you believe to be the basis for discrimination (race, sex, etc.); and
- The name(s), address(es), and telephone number(s) of any person(s) with information concerning your complaint.

When your complaint is investigated, you may be asked to provide copies of receipts, contracts, or other records supporting your claim of discrimination. Any materials that you would want returned should not be sent with your initial complaint.

Generally, most government agencies require that complaints be postmarked within 180 days of the discriminatory action. You should, however, inquire about specific deadlines that may apply to your case. Depending on your type of case or your status, you may be required to file your complaint earlier.